March Comes in Like a Lion

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY UMINO CHIKA
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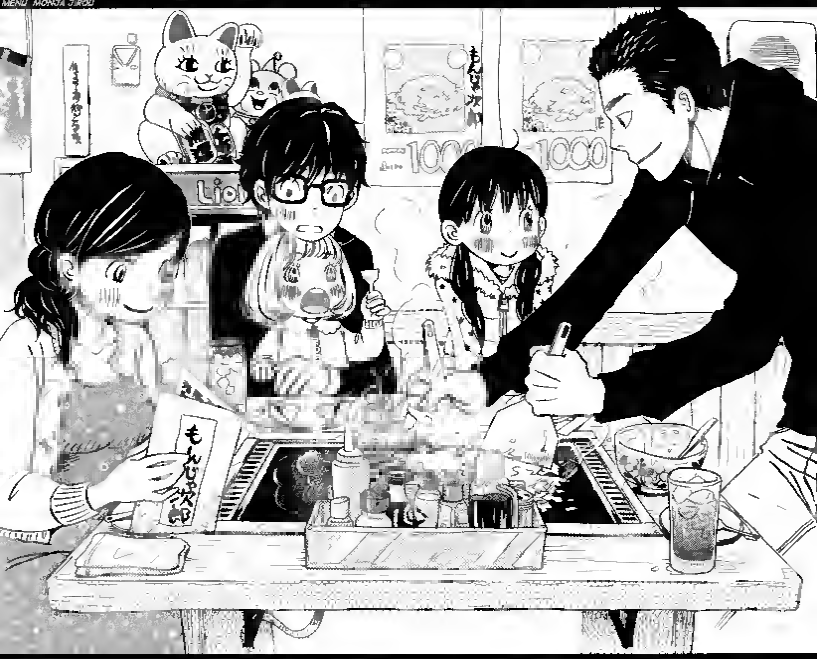


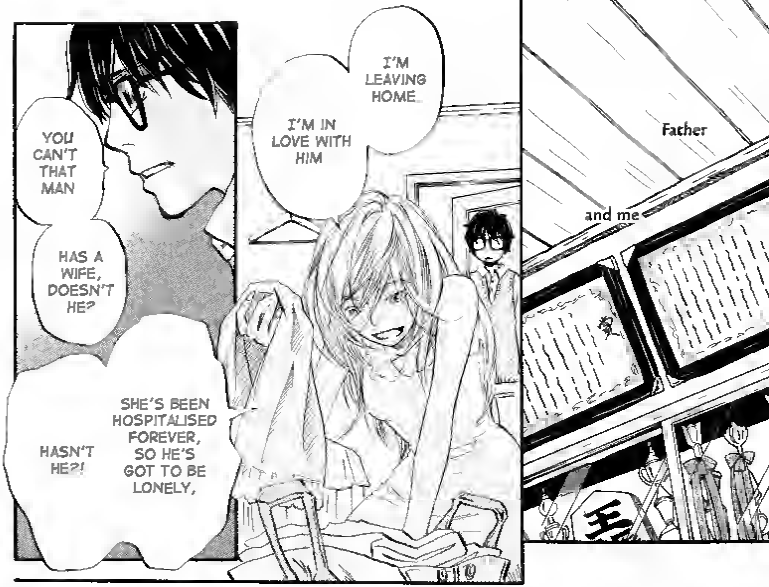
Chapter 30

Moonlight

Don't touch me.

But don't leave me–

No matter how much water you poured into her, she would never be filled!
A broken girl who was like cracked glass.
She was surrounded with good looks, wealth, and the affection of those around her, and yet she's...
always riddled with despair like a starved beast.
And—
—that was put there by none other than...


I'M LEAVING HOME...
I'M IN LOVE WITH HIM
YOU CAN'T THAT MAN
HAS A WIFE, DOESN'T HE?
SHE'S BEEN HOSPITALISED FOREVER, SO HE'S GOT TO BE LONELY,
HASN'T HE?!
Father
and me

I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN.
HOW HE LABELLED HIS DAUGHTER A FAILURE IN LIFE WHEN SHE WAS JUST IN HER 2ND YEAR OF MIDDLE SCHOOL.
I CAN'T ALLOW WHAT HE DID EITHER
SO WHAT?
DAD WON'T ALLOW IT

QUIT LYING!!
IT'S TRUE.
SHOGI ISN'T EVERY-THING.
"THERE'S LIFE OUT-SIDE OF SHOGI"
SAYING THINGS HE DOESN'T MEAN, LIKE
BOTH YOU AND DAD
DON'T HAVE ANYTHING IN YOUR HEADS BESIDES SHOGI.
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF IT
OF THE TWO OF YOU FEELING SORRY FOR ME,
TREATING ME LIKE I NEED TO BE HANDLED DELICATELY...
IT'S INFUR-IATING
JUST HOW LONG DO I
NEED TO FEEL MISERABLE LIKE THIS?!

NO MATTER WHERE I GO, THERE WON'T BE ANYONE WHO WILL MISS ME
I'M LEAVING
FATHER DOESN'T THINK
THAT YOU ARE UN-IMPORTANT, RIGHT, ANE-SAN?
BUT YOU'RE DIFFER-ENT, NEE-SAN
It's the first day of the third match of the finals for the tournament to deter-mine who will be the challenger for the title of Shishi Ou...
10 AM
A match is starting

I wonder what kind of fight it's turning out to be
facing off against each other
Right now in a special room set up just for the match, those two are quietly
When I played Shimada-san, I was overcome by a strange sensation
As if I had set foot into a sea of trees,
It was like being constricted by something that made absolutely no noise
I felt as though I was getting tangled in an overwhelming something

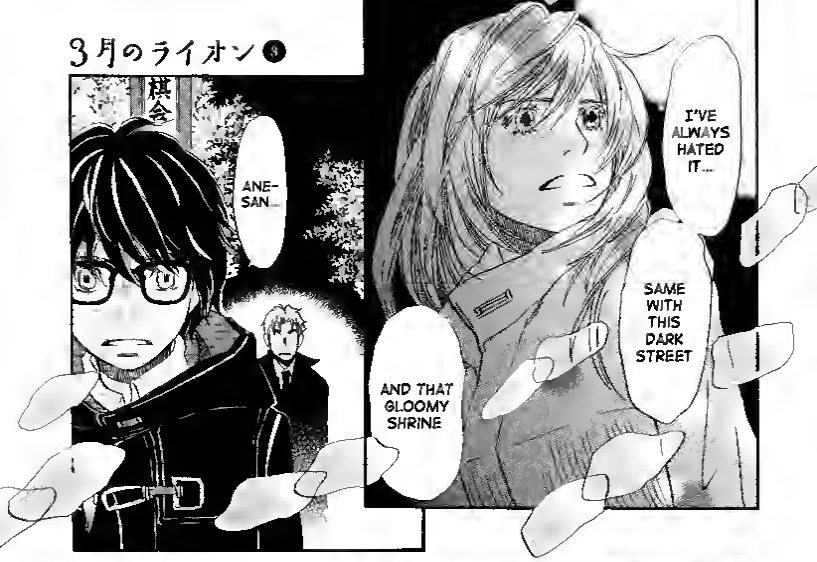
I wonder what kind of game he's playing against Gotou
SEN-SEI,
I HAVE THREE MONTHS' WORTH OF ABSENCE NOTES...
OOH,
KIRI-YAMA
CHECK THIS OUT.
IT'S INCRED-IBLE..
TWO HOURS IN, AND THE MATCH LOOKS LIKE THIS.
THIS...
IS...
Just by looking at how many moves had been played by that point
※☖P-〃
※☗S-〃
※☖P-3d
※☗S-4f
※☖P-9d
※☗P-9f
※☖P-8f
※☗S-5e
it felt like I could hear
the dull sound of heavy bones colliding with each other.

I WAS WONDERING HOW THOSE TWO, WHO BOTH HAVE SOLEMNESS AS THEIR SELLING POINT,
WOULD PLAY AGAINST EACH OTHER—
BUT IT WAS LIKE THEY WERE POUNDING EACH OTHER.
WELL, THEY STILL ARE.
.....
WANNA GO?
WHERE?
HUH?
TO THE SHOGI HALL.
BUT—
IT'S NOT A TITLE MATCH, SO THIS BLOG UPDATES AT ODD INTERVALS
IT'D BE A BETTER LEARNING EXPERIENCE TO GO THERE AND WATCH IT IN PERSON
BUT I'VE GOT SO MANY ABSENCES
SMACK
OWW...
IT'LL BE FINE, JUST GO!!

SFX: DOKI DOKI... SKIP (THUMP THUMP THUMP...)
He...
He's got enough, right?
He's just barely... in the clear... right?
I couldn't have done some thing to disgrace myself as a teacher, right?!
Eep!
Whoa.
Umm.
YO, KIRIY-AMA
KIRIY-AMA
AH, HE MOVED
G-4C?!
HUH?!
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?!
I'VE NEVER SEEN SOMETHING LIKE THIS FROM SHIMADA-SAN
IS HE JUST GONNA THROW HIS BISHOP AWAY HERE?!
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANIJA DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS EITHER...

From the room past the dark hallways, the one reserved for special matches,
I felt as though the presence of those two people
had seeped all the way into our room...
What?
Something is... wrong, isn't it?
How did their moves lead them into this?
Is it because of how long they've been playing?
The depth of their accumulated experience?
The weight of each of their exchanges?
Or all of those things?

a battle between two humans
that trust themselves.
The first game of the Shishi Ou Championship Finals Tournament's third round
The match ended at 9 PM.
After 153 moves, Shimada 8th dan resigned.
began with a win for Gotou 9th dan.
REI.
THIS PLACE NEVER CHANGES, DOES IT?
IT'S SUCH A DEPRESSING BUILDING...


I'VE ALWAYS HATED IT...
SAME WITH THIS DARK STREET
AND THAT GLOOMY SHRINE
ANE-SAN...
将棋会館

YO
WELL, WELL,
THE STALKERS ARE ALL TOGETHER
将棋会館
WHY ARE YOU HERE, KYOKO?
...
WELL...
AND YOU, YOU WERE RARING TO GO UP AGAINST ME, WEREN'T YOU?
WHAT HAPPENED? I GUESS SHIMADA WAS JUST THAT GOOD, HUH?

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE A-CLASS.
I didn't want to leave.
HEY,
ARE YOU REALLY LEAVING?
HEY...
WAIT
But we couldn't be together anymore.
ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY
FROM ME?

I couldn't protect
I thought that unless I could stand on my own two feet,
I wanted to grow up fast.
the people that were important to me.

AAAAAAH,
DAMN IT, I LOST
Because I got a mere lecture on that Bishop Exchange
WHEN-EVER I TRIED TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE,
HE WOULD FIRE BACK IMMEDIATELY,
WITH SUCH GLEE!!
HE REALLY IS STRONG,
THAT OLD MAN
And he's got such a scary face!!
AND ON TOP OF BEING STRONG, HE'S SO IMMATURE!!
.....
BUT—

THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL I'LL LOSE NEXT TIME.
Yeah,
of course,
Anija!
Chapter 30 end